

Peculiarities of the Japanese language (complex & straightforward)

Lesson 0

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http://www.komi.com/japanese/lessons/lessen_00.html

Japanese seems pretty difficult for **beginners**, even the task of memorizing new words is a big problem, since Japanese appeared and has been developing outside European languages we're used to. Languages of Romanic group have lots of similar words in the vocabularies, originated from Latin and Greek.

Japan had been feudal until the 19th century and this certainly left its mark. As a result, the Japanese language has a unique code of politeness, You have to adjust your speech a great deal, depending on who you are speaking to (gender, age and especially rank)..

It's interesting!

The Japanese language doesn't have [I]. Instead of "Alex" a Japanese will say "Arex".

Japanese language verbs have different time aspects (Past, Present, Future) and so do adjectives.

AKAI - RED

AKAKATTA - WAS RED

*Japanese writing system is unusual and complex, because it bases on Chinese characters and two syllabaries. In order to study Japanese, you have to know all 1850 ideographs and 146 syllabary characters. **A Japanese would read a text and understand it by syllables, rather than by letters as Europeans do.** That is to say, they have a syllable thinking. if you ask a Japanese to pronounce 'WATAKUSHI' (I) backwards, he will pronounce: '**SHI-KU-TA-WA**' rather than '**ISUKATAW**' as we would say.*

In Japanese, parts of speech (verb, adjective etc.) don't depend on a person or number (except for personal pronouns) nor gender. Without a context you cannot understand if we are speaking about a he-cat or she-cat, about one species or a few. When necessary, the number of items can be indicated or clarified in brackets: 'plural.'

In the Japanese language the 'U' and 'I' vowels aren't pronounced when between breath consonants.

For example: ' pencil' is written 'EMPITSU,' but pronounced as ' EMP'TS' '

[SH] in 'SHI' is much softer than in English and pronounced with a bit of hissing.

**WATAKUSHI
(I),
WATASHI (I),
ANATA (you),
HITO
(person),
SENSEI
(teacher),**

**GAKUSEI
student),
NEKO (cat),
HON (a book),
EMPITSU
(pencil),
KURUMA
(car),**

**IE (house),
AKAI (red),
KUROI
(black),
TAIHEN
(very),
II (good).**

Task Learn the words by heart Pay particular attention to the comments below

- WATAKUSHI * "U" in between 'K' & 'SH' will be reduced (weak) whereas 'SHI' will be pronounced with a bit of hissing.
- WATASHI * Colloquial of 'watakushi.'
- HITO * 'I' will be reduced. Actual pronunciation is 'H'TO' (soft [h]).
- SENSEI * Can be pronounced as SENSEI, but more often as SENSE: ('E:' stands for long [e]).
- GAKUSEI * Actual pronunciation is GAK'SEI or GAK'SE:.
- NEKO * A cat or cats, it depends on the context.
- EMPITSU * in fact, EMPTS (weak vowels!).
- KURUMA * Originally, its main meaning was TROLLEY, CART. (Try not to round your lips when saying [u]!)
- IE * There are a number of synonyms for 'HOUSE, HOME' with their own usages.
- II * A very tricky word: it is always tending to turn into its more frequent synonym YOI.

Down:

1. You
2. Black
3. A man
4. Cat

Across:

1. I
2. A book
3. Red

Down:

1. Red
2. A teacher

3. A pencil

Across:

1. A student
2. Very, awfully
3. Good
4. Car

In polite speech, a simple Japanese sentence features the link verb 'DESU' at the end of each sentence.

watakushi wa sensei desu. anata wa gakusei desu.

hon wa akai desu. kuruma wa kuroi desu.

I am a teacher. You are a student.

The book is red (The books are red). The car is black (The cars are black).

Basically, the '**WA**' topic particle identifies the **topic** of your sentence.

Topic essentially indicates what you're talking about, i.e., 'old' information. Everything after '**WA**' is new information about your **topic**..

*The '**MO**' particle is placed instead of the '**WA**' particle to mean '**also**,' '**too**,' '**both... and...**'*

*The '**NO**' particle indicates possession: '**anata no**' means '**YOUR**'*

*watakushi wa gakusei desu. anata **mo** gakusei desu. watakushi **mo** anata **mo** gakusei desu.*

*I am a student. You are a student, **too**. **Both** you **and** I are students.*

*hon **wa** akai desu. kuruma **mo** akai desu.*

*The book is red. The car is red, **too**.*

*watakushi **no** kuruma wa kuroi desu. sensei **no** kuruma wa akai desu.*

***My** car is black. The **teacher's** car is red.*

*Use the **SAN** polite suffix to address someone or to mention someone in a conversation.*

NEVER should you apply SAN to yourself!

- *Watakushi wa sensei des'.*
- *Tanaka San mo sensei des'.*
- *Tanaka San mo watashi mo sensei des'.*
- *Anata mo Ishida San mo Yamada San mo gakusei des'.*
- *Watashi no neko wa kuroi des'.*
- *Anata no neko mo kuroi des'.*
- *Anata no neko mo watashi no neko mo kuroi des'.*
- *Tanaka San no hon wa ii des'.*
- *Ishida sensei no hon mo ii des'.*
- *Anata no sensei no hon mo taihen ii des'.*
-
- I am a teacher.
- Mr Tanaka is also a teacher.
- Both Mr Tanaka and I are teachers.
- You, Mr. Ishida and Mr. Yamada are students.

- My cat is black.
- Your cat is black, too.
- Both your cat and my cat are black.
- Mr Tanaka's book is good.
- Teacher Ishida's book is also good.
- Your teacher's book is also very good.

Accents in Japanese words are not so powered as in English. Unlike European languages, Japanese speech is canorous and songful.

Melodiousness of Japanese speech is attained primarily by ascending tone.

*Pronounce **kuroy** [kuroI] (black) just as you really want to – with stressed “o”.*

*And now try to pronounce it in the way a Japanese would do it - bitonously. For that, “**ku**” (atonic (unaccented)) syllable shall be pronounced as one note and “**roy**” (accented) syllable - as another - higher - note.*

Another example: try to pronounce “watakushi”. The first syllable is atonic (i.e. the tone is lower), and the second, third and fourth syllables are accented (i.e. the tones of reproducing are higher than the first one).

À The accents are not denoted in writing. One just should know how to pronounce some or other words. In textbooks accentuation is frequently marked (when needed) by horizontal broken line. It is placed lower above atonic syllables and higher – above accented syllables.

- *For better understanding we will capitalize accented syllables, and atonic syllables will be written in small letters (**waTAKUSHI**).*

waTAKUSHI (I)	IE (a house)	aKAI (red)
aNAta (you,- (singular and plural))	HOn (a book)	kuROI (black)
gaKUSEI (a student)	NEko (a cat)	eMPITSU (a pencil)
seNSEI (a teacher)	kuRUMA (a car)	Ii (good)

HAi (yes)

KAsa (an umbrella)

aOI (blue, green)

yaMA (a mountain)

DAre (who)

iE (no)

iSHA (a doctor)

shiROI [sI`roi] (white)

KI (a tree)

NAn, NAni (what)

Fizzle "**SHI**" and "**SHA**" slightly.

Note: The accents may change when used in a particular sentence.

You must **not forget** that wrong accentuation results in complete shift of the words' meaning!

kaMI (paper), KAmi (hair); KI (a tree), ki (spirit).

When one speaks Japanese, he should always realize what object is being spoken of (to be more precise - where and by whom it is located).	"koRE" (this)	<i>"THIS" (something / someone) is situated by the speaker.</i>
	"soRE" (that)	<i>"THAT" (something/someone) is situated by the interlocutor.</i>
	"aRE" (over there, yonder)	<i>the object of the conversation is standing off both the speaker and the interlocutor.</i>
	"DOre" (which)	<i>"WHICH..?" (of the available)</i>

KA particle when at the end of a sentence makes a question.

KA particle as a sign of a question is pronounced with an intonation rise.

kore, sore,are, dore pronouns can be easily transformed into koNO (this),soNO (that),aNO (yonder, that ... over there) , DOno (what).

kore wa nan des ka. sore wa anata no hon des. sore wa nan des ka. kore wa watashi no hon des.

are wa anata no kuruma des ka. iie. are wa watashi no isha no kuruma des.

***What is this? This is your book. And what is this? This is my book.
Is this your car (over there)? No. This is my doctor's car.***

***Kono kasa wa anata no (kasa) des ka. Hai, sono kasa wa watashi no des.
Ano aoi kasa wa dare no des ka. Ano kasa wa Iwanofu san no des.***

Iwanofu san no kasa wa aoi des ka. Iie. Siroi des. ano kasa wa Nikitin san no des.

*Is **this** umbrella yours? Yes, **this** umbrella is mine. And whose is **that** blue umbrella?
That umbrella is Mr. Ivanov's. Does Mr. Ivanov have a blue umbrella?No, white. **This** is Mr. Nikitin's umbrella.*

If one and the same noun is often repeated, it can be replaced by NO.

*Two **NOs** (ANATA NO NO) are combined into ANATA **NO**.*

Kore wa nan des ka • Sore wa kuruma des. • Yamada isha no kuruma wa dore des ka.

- **Kore des. • Ano kuruma mo Yamada san no kuruma des ka.**
- **Hai, ano kuruma mo Yamada san no des.**
- **Tanaka san no kuruma wa kore des ka.**
- **Hai, Tanaka san no kuruma wa dare no des ka. • Sono akai kuruma wa watashi no des.**

Space (a sequel to the previous lesson).

"koKO"
(here)

"HERE" A place where the speaker is located.

"soKO"
(there)

THERE. A place where the collocutor is located.

"aSOKO"
(over there)

OVER THERE. A place which is equidistant from the speaker and his collocutor.

"DOko"
(where?)

WHERE? In what place?

anata no kuruma wa doko des ka.
watashi no kuruma wa asoko des.

Where is your car?
My car is **over there**.

Yamada sensei wa koko des ka.
hai. koko des.

Is teacher Yamada **here**?
Yes, (he is) here.

koko wa doko des ka.
koko wa eki des.

Where are we?
This is a station.

Sore wa doko des ka.
Where is it?
Sore wa Mosukuva des.
It is in Moscow.
or
It is Moscow (!!!)

There is an intonation tumble at last U sound
iMASu
aRIMASu
Last U is practically not pronounced.

sore wa Mosukuwa desu.

It is in Moscow / It is Moscow.

sore wa Mosukuwa ni arimasu.

It is located in Moscow.

IMAS & ARIMAS
verbs demand NI particle
after words determining location

ARIMAS verb is generally used for determining location of stocks

anata wa doko ni imas ka.
watakushi wa ie ni imas.
hon wa soko ni arimas ka.
hai. koko ni arimas.

Where will you be? I will be at home. Is the book here? Yes, (it is) here.

*To be more precise, it should be noted that while speaking about **imas** and **arimas** verbs division of objects into “**living beings**” and “**stocks**” is not quite correct. Objects’ ability to move in space is decisive in choosing this or that verb.*

*Speaking about a tree or a house we shall always use **arimas** verb as these objects cannot change their location unassisted.*

*While such objects as, say, a car or a train having the ability of self-movement, demand using **imas** verb. But one should note that, for example, train condemned to long-term immobile stay in a dead-end, will enforce using **arimas** verb.*

INCORRECT

:

sore wa Mosukuwa ni des. (! NI does not match DES !)
sore wa Mosukuwa arimas. (! ARIMAS is used without NI !)
neko wa asoko ni arimas. (! A living being demands IMAS !)
hon wa asoko ni imas. (! A book is not a living object !)

anata no **neko** wa doko **ni imas** ka.

anata no neko wa doko des ka.

Where is your cat?

neko wa ie **ni imas**.

neko wa ie des.

The cat is at home.	
anata no <i>kasa</i> wa doko <i>ni arimas</i> ka.	anata no kasa wa doko des ka.
Where is your umbrella?	
vatasi no <i>kasa</i> wa ie <i>ni arimas</i> .	vatasi no kasa wa ie des.
My umbrella was left at home.	

- Exercise 1
- Read the sentences and translate them into English
- ***Anata no sensei wa doko ni imas ka.***
- ***Ie ni imas.***
- ***Tanaka san no kuruma wa koko ni arimas ka.***
- ***Hai. Tanaka san no kuruma wa koko ni arimas.***
- ***Tanaka san mo koko ni imas.***
- ***Tanaka san no hon wa doko des ka?***

Asoko des.

http://www.komi.com/japanese/lessons/lessen_05.html